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# ON KISSING AND MAKING UP: COURT PROTOCOL AND HISTORIOGRAPHY IN ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S 'EXPERIMENT WITH *PROSKYNESIS*'

HUGH BOWDEN

It is widely accepted by modern scholars that at some point during his campaigns in Afghanistan, Alexander attempted to persuade his Macedonian followers to accept the Persian practice of προσκύνησις (possibly, but not necessarily involving prostration), that this was opposed by some Greek and Macedonian members of his court, including most prominently the historian Callisthenes, and that the attempt was given up. It is the aim of this article to re-examine the evidence and the assumptions, both ancient and modern, that lie behind the episode as it is reported. I will argue that:

1. The words προσκύνησις and προσκυνεῖν had a range of meanings in Greek, but were primarily associated with Greek ideas of Persian behaviour;
2. The gestures covered by the term προσκύνησις were not exclusively, or even primarily, associated with the gods by Greeks;
3. The depiction of Callisthenes as representing principled opposition to Alexander's actions is fictitious;
4. The objection to the adoption by Alexander of 'barbarian' practices reflects Roman prejudices, rather than any concern of Alexander's contemporaries;
5. The surviving literary sources do not provide reliable evidence for any 'experiment with προσκύνησις' by Alexander.<sup>1</sup>

The dominant scholarly approach to the study of Alexander remains *Quellenforschung*. Scholars see their task as trying to discover which contemporary writers were the source for which element of the surviving Alexander histories, and then working out what the motivations of those writers might have been, and hence establishing how their testimony should be interpreted. While some use of *Quellenforschung* is necessary in dealing with the issue of προσκύνησις, this article will show that an approach to the literary evidence that recognizes more factors influencing its creation and transmission can enrich our understanding of Alexander. It will show that there is good reason to doubt the historicity of the traditions about the introduction of προσκύνησις, and suggest that in all probability Alexander's adoption of the practices of the Persian court were considered uncontroversial at the time, and became a concern only to writers in the Roman period.

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was delivered at a seminar in the Institute of Classical Studies in January 2010. It has benefited from the comments made there, and by the readers for *BICS*.

*Proskynesis*

The first set of questions that must be addressed concern the words προσκυνεῖν and προσκύνῃσις. Almost all modern scholars follow the same view: ‘among the Greeks [...] *proskynesis* was understood as a sacred act, only to be performed before gods (or their images).’<sup>2</sup> This claim is repeated, often without much examination, from book to book. It can be traced back to the work of J. Horst, whose *Proskynein* was published in 1932, although written some years earlier.<sup>3</sup> The period 1918-34 was one of great upheaval for the German Protestant churches, in structure, theology, and liturgy, and Horst’s book was a contribution to the debate about the last of these. Horst was concerned with the nature of worship (*Anbetung*), and wanted to root any discussion of liturgy in the text of the New Testament. On the basis that the word in the New Testament that corresponded to the verb *anbeten* was προσκυνεῖν, Horst took on the task of exploring the use of that word and its cognates in the New Testament. But recognizing that προσκυνεῖν was ‘ein eigentümliches griechisches Wort’ (‘a peculiar Greek word’), used in both non-religious and religious contexts, he widened his investigation to examine the word in Greek literature more fully.<sup>4</sup> The result is a very valuable study of the words προσκυνεῖν and προσκύνῃσις, which, whatever its impact on the German Church (which was limited by the rise of the Nazis the year after its publication, and the consequent reorganization of the German churches the following year),<sup>5</sup> was welcomed by classicists.<sup>6</sup> But Horst’s underlying theological motivations, and his focus on the issue of worship, influenced his interpretation of the evidence. The claim that the ‘ceremony’ of προσκύνῃσις was considered by the Greeks appropriate only to the gods, and that for them it always had this

<sup>2</sup> G. M. Rogers, *Alexander: the ambiguity of greatness* (New York 2004) 175; cf. e.g. I. Worthington, ‘Alexander the Great, nation-building, and the creation and maintenance of empire’ in *Makers of ancient strategy: from the Persian Wars to the fall of Rome*, ed. V. D. Hanson (Princeton 2010) 129; H.-U. Wiemer, *Alexander der Grosse* (Munich 2005) 138; M. J. Olbrycht, *Aleksander Wielki i świat irański* (Rzeszów 2004) 35; F. Sisti and A. Zambrini, *Arriano Anabasi di Alessandro*, 2 vols (Rome 2004) II 401; E. A. Fredricksmeier, ‘Alexander’s religion and divinity’ in *Brill’s companion to Alexander the Great*, ed. J. Roisman (Leiden 2003) 253-78 (275); S. R. Asirvatham, ‘Olympias’ snake and Callisthenes’ stand’, in *Between magic and religion: interdisciplinary studies in ancient Mediterranean religion and society*, ed. S. R. Asirvatham, C. O. Pache and J. Watrous (Lanham 2001) 109; A. B. Bosworth, *A historical commentary on Arrian’s History of Alexander* 2 vols (Oxford, 1980-95) II 68-69; E. Badian, *Collected papers on Alexander the Great* (London 2012) 257 (original published in 1981); P. A. Brunt, *Arrian, History of Alexander and Indica*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1976-83) I 538; P. Green, *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.: a historical biography* (Harmondsworth 1974) 372-73; R. J. Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London 1974) 321; J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander: a commentary* (Oxford 1969) 150; E. J. Bickerman, ‘À propos d’un passage de Chares de Mitylène’ *PdP* 18 (1963) 241-55 (252); Feodora Prinzessin von Sachsen-Meiningen, ‘Prokynesis in Iran’, in *Geschichte der Hunnen*, vol. 2: *Die Hephthaliten in Iran*, ed. F. Altheim (Berlin 1960) 125-66 (125). (J. P. V. D. Balsdon, ‘The divinity of Alexander the Great’, *Historia* 1 (1950) 363-88 (374-76) has a more careful discussion.)

<sup>3</sup> J. Horst *Proskynein: zur Anbetung im Urchristentum nach ihrer religionsgeschichtlichen Eigenart* (Gütersloh 1932).

<sup>4</sup> Horst, *Proskynein* (n. 3 above) 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> On the historical background see K. Scholder, *The churches and the Third Reich: preliminary history and the time of illusions, 1918-1934* (London 1987).

<sup>6</sup> E.g. F. Schwenn, review of Horst, *Proskynein*, *Gnomon* 11 (1935) 479-83.

sense, had been made earlier by P. Schnabel.<sup>7</sup> Schnabel relies for this claim on passages of Arrian which will be discussed later, but his conclusions will have provided support for Horst's reading of the wider canon, since it was προσκύνησις as a religious practice that Horst was really concerned with.

A thorough re-examination of προσκύνησις as it concerns Alexander the Great should start with a fresh look at the use of the term in Greek literature. In what follows we will consider the way the word was used down to the time of Alexander himself. We will also consider the distinct, and more problematic, question of how it was understood by the surviving writers about Alexander. From this two main facts will become clear. First, while it is certainly true that the word προσκύνησις was sometimes used to describe actions directed towards gods, it is by no means obvious that this was its primary meaning. Second, writers of the Roman imperial period interpreted the word on the basis of their own understanding of the actions to which it referred, and this understanding may not be that of the writers of Alexander's own time.

The noun προσκύνησις first occurs in surviving texts in philosophical works from the fourth century, in the plural;<sup>8</sup> the cognate verb προσκυνέω is rather older, and the earliest surviving use of the word is in a fragment of Hipponax of Ephesus: 'After waiting for the white-froked dawn by his side, you will προσκυνεῖν to the Hermes of the Phlyasians.'<sup>9</sup> The verb is used once by Aeschylus, in *Persae*, spoken by a Persian messenger describing the Persians caught in a storm after Salamis praying to earth and heaven.<sup>10</sup> Herodotus uses it eight times: twice he uses it when describing the way Persians and Egyptians greet each other,<sup>11</sup> passages to which we will return. In addition to this Harpagus performs προσκύνησις to his master Astyages, King of Media;<sup>12</sup> Egyptians προσκυνεῖν before a colossal statue set up by Rhampsanitus;<sup>13</sup> Darius' companions do προσκύνησις to him when they acknowledge him as king;<sup>14</sup> Persian courtiers do προσκύνησις to Xerxes;<sup>15</sup> the Spartan hostages, Sperthias and Boulis, refuse to do προσκύνησις before Xerxes;<sup>16</sup> finally, in a story of questionable historicity, Xerxes' companions do προσκύνησις to him before leaping off his ship to lighten the load in a storm.<sup>17</sup> It can be seen that all these examples (with the possible exception of the Hipponax fragment, where the context is lost) are of Persian or Egyptian behaviour. The word is used twice by Euripides also in non-Greek (in both cases Phrygian) contexts: Hecabe describes how Helen received προσκύνησις in

<sup>7</sup> P. Schnabel, 'Die Begründung des hellenistischen Königtums durch Alexander,' *Klio* 25 (1925) 113-27 (118-20).

<sup>8</sup> Plat. *Leg.* 887e3; Aristot. *Rhet.* 1361a36.

<sup>9</sup> Fr. 37 Diehl = 47 West = 51 Degan.

<sup>10</sup> A. *Per.* 499.

<sup>11</sup> Hdt. 1.134, 2.80.

<sup>12</sup> Hdt. 1.119.1.

<sup>13</sup> Hdt. 2.121.

<sup>14</sup> Hdt. 3.86.

<sup>15</sup> Hdt. 7.14.1.

<sup>16</sup> Hdt. 7.136.1

<sup>17</sup> Hdt. 8.118.4.

Paris' house,<sup>18</sup> and a Phrygian greets Orestes with the words: προσκυνῶ σ', ἄναξ, νόμοισι βαρβάροισι προσπίτνων.<sup>19</sup>

In other fifth-century dramatic texts the word is used in a wider range of circumstances. In *Prometheus Bound*, the chorus suggest that wise men προσκυνεῖν before Adrasteia, that is 'bow to necessity',<sup>20</sup> in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Oedipus describes himself and the Thebans as suppliants who προσκυνεῖν to Teiresias;<sup>21</sup> in his *Electra*, Orestes talks of doing προσκύνησις to the seats of his ancestral gods;<sup>22</sup> in *Philoctetes*, Philoctetes himself talks about doing προσκύνησις to his home on the island of Lemnos, and the word is used twice to describe treatment of the bow of Heracles;<sup>23</sup> in *Oedipus Coloneus*, the messenger describes Theseus 'doing προσκύνησις to the earth and to Olympus of the gods at the same time';<sup>24</sup> a fragment of Sophocles refers to everyone doing προσκύνησις to the man who reversed the course of the sun, taken as a reference to Atreus.<sup>25</sup> In Aristophanes the word occurs twice: in *Plutus*, the eponymous god says that he does προσκύνησις to the sun and the land,<sup>26</sup> while in *Vespae*, Bdelycleon says to Philocleon: 'You do not even understand that you are being mocked by the men to whom you almost do προσκύνησις. You have not realized that you are a slave.'<sup>27</sup>

Xenophon uses the term almost always to describe Persian circumstances. Most frequently it refers to greeting the Persian King,<sup>28</sup> but it is also used of Orontas, a Persian noble.<sup>29</sup> It is also used of honouring gods.<sup>30</sup> Isocrates uses the word once, to describe Persians honouring their King.<sup>31</sup> The word is used metaphorically by both Demosthenes and Aeschines in their respective speeches on the embassy,<sup>32</sup> and twice more by Demosthenes, once to describe the attitude of barbarians (*i.e.* Persians) to those who rule them,<sup>33</sup> and once in the phrase also found in *Prometheus Bound* of bowing to necessity.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Eur. *Tro.* 1021.

<sup>19</sup> Or. 1507: 'I προσκυνῶ you, king, falling before you as is the custom of barbarians.'

<sup>20</sup> [A.] *PV* 936; cf. Dem. 25.37, Plat. *Resp.* 451a4.

<sup>21</sup> S. *OT* 237.

<sup>22</sup> S. *El.* 1374.

<sup>23</sup> S. *Phil.* 534, 657, 776.

<sup>24</sup> S. *OC* 1645.

<sup>25</sup> S. *fr.* 738 Radt.

<sup>26</sup> Ar. *Plut.* 771.

<sup>27</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 515-7: καταγελάμενος μὲν οὖν / οὐκ ἐπαίεις ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν, οἷς σὺ μόνον οὐ προσκυνεῖς. / ἀλλὰ δουλεύων λέληθας.

<sup>28</sup> Xen. *Cyr.* 4.4.13, 5.3.18, 8.3.14 (referring to Cyrus the Great), *Anab.* 1.8.21 (Cyrus the younger), *Hell.* 4.1.35 (by implication Artaxerxes II). cf. *Ages.* 1.34, *Anab.* 3.2.13.

<sup>29</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 1.6.10.

<sup>30</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.9 (on which see below), *Cyr.* 2.4.19, 7.5.32.

<sup>31</sup> Isoc. *Paneg.* 151.

<sup>32</sup> Dem. 19.314; Aeschin. 2.150. In each case the term is used after an evocation of Persian kingship, although the effect of this on an audience is difficult to judge.

<sup>33</sup> Dem. 21.106.

<sup>34</sup> Dem. 25.37.

That same phrase is used by Plato in the *Republic*,<sup>35</sup> and he uses the word twice more in that work, once to describe appropriate behaviour towards the graves of heroes,<sup>36</sup> and once, ironically, to describe the respect due to a talented sophist.<sup>37</sup> In *Laws* he refers to προκυλίσεις ἅμα καὶ προσκυνήσεις performed by Greeks and Barbarians at the rising and setting of the sun.<sup>38</sup>

From this survey we can draw some conclusions about the use of the words προσκυνεῖν in Greece down to the time of Alexander. The use of the term by those who wrote about Alexander, both contemporaries and later authors, will be discussed later. Inevitably almost all the examples come from Athens, but they may be taken to reflect more general usage. We need to focus on two questions: what the word referred to, and what it was understood to signify.

It is clear that the word was not used consistently to describe a single specific gesture or action. The most common assumption of what προσκύνησις involved is based on the statement of Herodotus that when a Persian greets another Persian of much higher status, he does προσκύνησις to him, 'throwing himself on the ground'.<sup>39</sup> But elsewhere Herodotus describes how when Egyptians pass each other they 'προσκυνεῖν by lowering the hand to the knee',<sup>40</sup> a gesture that might imply some kind of bow. The messenger in *Oedipus Coloneus* describes Theseus doing προσκύνησις to the earth and the Olympian gods at the same time,<sup>41</sup> and this same idea of the action taking in earth and sky is also found in Aeschylus and Aristophanes.<sup>42</sup> This might also point towards a bowing gesture, with hand and head moving up and down, rather than prostration. If we turn to the etymology of the words, we find a slightly different meaning. Προσκυνέω must mean in origin 'I kiss towards' or 'I blow a kiss'. This gesture is described by Greek authors, but not by any earlier than Lucian, writing in the middle of the second century AD. But it appears visually much earlier, in representations of petitioners approaching Near Eastern rulers.<sup>43</sup> A mirror pair of reliefs originally displayed on the façade of the staircase leading up to Darius' audience hall at Persepolis are the most monumental examples of the scene. A man stands before the King: 'He bends forward in a bow, lifting his face towards the king and putting his hand to his lips in a gesture of respect to the king.'<sup>44</sup>

Other similar depictions of the royal audience were displayed at Persepolis, and the image was disseminated widely across the Achaemenid empire, in a variety of media, and

<sup>35</sup> Plat. *Resp.* 451a4.

<sup>36</sup> Plat. *Resp.* 469b1.

<sup>37</sup> Plat. *Resp.* 398a4.

<sup>38</sup> Plat. *Leg.* 887e1-2: προκυλίσεις is literally 'rolling forward'.

<sup>39</sup> Hdt. 1.134: προσπίπτων προσκυνέει τὸν ἕτερον; cf. 8.36.

<sup>40</sup> Hdt. 2.80.

<sup>41</sup> S. *OC* 1654-5.

<sup>42</sup> A. *Per.* 499; Ar. *Plut.* 771.

<sup>43</sup> J. A. Scott, 'The gesture of *proskynesis*', *CJ* 17 (1922) 403-04; Bickerman, 'À propos' (n. 2 above) 250-52; R. N. Frye, 'Gestures of deference to royalty in ancient Iran', *IA* 9 (1972) 102-07.

<sup>44</sup> L. K. Allen, 'Le roi imaginaire: an audience with the Achaemenid king', in *Imaginary kings: royal images in the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome*, ed. O. Hekster and R. Fowler (Stuttgart 2005) 39-62 (41-42).

in a variety of contexts, and it would have become familiar to Greeks, especially those from Ionia, as a representation of Persian ceremonial.<sup>45</sup> It is hardly likely to be a coincidence that the Greek verb προσκυνεῖν first appears, in Ionian authors (Hipponax and Herodotus), from the end of the sixth century, just when images of a Persian courtier blowing a kiss to the king are spreading across the territories of the empire. Indeed, the majority of uses of the word προσκυνεῖν in classical authors are in Persian (or more broadly ‘barbarian’) contexts. Although the narrow meaning of the word might be ‘to blow a kiss’, it can be seen to be used in a slightly looser sense to mean ‘to greet in the Persian style’, and thus to include within its range of possible meanings ‘to prostrate oneself’.<sup>46</sup>

In several of the passages referred to above, the verb is used to describe worship of the gods, but this can be seen as a secondary meaning. One passage of Xenophon that might suggest that προσκυνεῖν had a particularly religious meaning is worth examining. In *Anabasis* Xenophon presents a speech he claims to have given to the mercenaries he was with, which aims to inspire them with memories of past victories over the Persians. He notes: ‘As evidence of them it is still possible to see the victory monuments, but the greatest proof is the freedom of the cities in which you were born and raised: you do προσκύνησις to no human master, but to the gods.’<sup>47</sup> Xenophon is here clearly referring back to the episode in Herodotus where the Spartans, Spertias and Boulis, are told to prostrate themselves, and assert in response that it is not their custom to do προσκύνησις to men.<sup>48</sup> The Spartans in Herodotus make no mention of the gods, and it is clear that in both passages the contrast being drawn is between the freedom of the Greeks and the enslavement of the subjects of the Persian King. In this context Xenophon’s additional remark about the gods should be understood as a gesture of ‘conventional piety’, warding off divine envy, rather than a significant statement about Greek religious practice. To prostrate oneself before another human being is not to blaspheme, but to show oneself a slave, as Aristophanes indicates.<sup>49</sup>

We might contrast this use of the word by Xenophon with another incident. Xenophon describes how he himself had made a short speech:

Just as he said this someone sneezed, and the soldiers on a single impulse did προσκύνησις to the god. Xenophon said, ‘It seems to me, men, that, since when we were speaking about our salvation an omen from Zeus the Saviour appeared, we should vow to make a thank-offering for our salvation as soon as we reach friendly

<sup>45</sup> Allen, ‘Le roi imaginaire’ (n. 44, above) 46-62. Examples include sealings from Daskyleion in western Asia Minor dating probably to the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424/3 BC), for which see D. Kaptan, *The Daskyleion bullae: seal images from the western Achaemenid empire* (Leiden 2002).

<sup>46</sup> On the looseness of the meaning of *proskynein* see H. Bolkestein, *Theophrastos’ Charakter der Deisidaimonia als religionsgeschichtliche urkunde* (Giessen 1929) 31.

<sup>47</sup> Anab. 3.2.13.

<sup>48</sup> Hdt. 7.136.1.

<sup>49</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 515-7. See P. Briant, *Alexander the Great and his empire: a short introduction* (Princeton 2010) 124-25.

territory, and that we also vow to sacrifice to the other gods as much as is in our power.<sup>50</sup>

Xenophon is here offering a characteristically detailed exegesis of the sneeze, which we can pass over: the idea that a sneeze was a good omen goes back to Homer.<sup>51</sup> What is interesting for our purposes is that the spontaneous response of the soldiers to a sneeze is προσκύνησις. It is clear from Athenaeus that this was a widespread practice:<sup>52</sup> it was an automatic response to a sneeze, equivalent to the practice of saying ‘Bless you!’. The similarity extends to the fact that saying ‘Bless you!’ is in form a religious act, although usually there is no conscious religious motivation in saying it. What is not clear is what Greeks actually did on these occasions. It is hardly likely to involve prostration, or indeed to be an action that a Greek would be worried about doing spontaneously under any circumstance. Above all the story is evidence that not all uses of the word προσκύνησις refer to solemn actions.

Clearly προσκυνεῖν was used to describe worshiping gods, and reverencing sacred objects and places, but equally clearly this is a derivative meaning in the classical period. The earliest example of the gesture of blowing a kiss being explicitly described as a greeting to a god comes in Lucian’s essay *On the Dance*, and even here it is made clear that the action was not considered primarily a religious act. Lucian contrasts the elaborateness with which Indians greet the sun each morning and evening by dancing, with the Greek assumption that ‘the prayer is complete if we have kissed our hand.’<sup>53</sup> What Lucian is objecting to is the habit of greeting the sun merely as one would a casual acquaintance. In so complaining he is overstating the case a little, since such relatively casual greetings to the gods were not abnormal.<sup>54</sup> It has long been accepted by scholars of Greek religion, if not by historians of Alexander the Great, that there was not in classical Greece a separate set of gestures reserved for the gods that could not be used towards mortals.<sup>55</sup> When the term προσκυνεῖν is used to describe worship of gods it does not necessarily refer to blowing a kiss, but it may indicate a certain extravagance of action, or excessiveness of reverence, that in a Greek mind would characterize the behaviour of a Persian. And it is this Persian characteristic that is the primary meaning of the word, rather than anything more specific. Attempts to come up with a simple description of the form and implication of προσκύνησις, although attractive, are inevitably oversimplifications which lead to oversimplified interpretations of the stories about it.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.9.

<sup>51</sup> Hom. *Od.* 17.541-5.

<sup>52</sup> Athen. 2.66c.

<sup>53</sup> Lucian *de saltat.* 17: οὐχ ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς τὴν χεῖρα κύσαντες ἡγοῦμεθα ἐντελῆ ἡμῶν εἶναι τὴν εὐχὴν.

<sup>54</sup> W. Burkert, *Greek religion: archaic and classical* (Oxford 1985) 75: ‘A cult image or sanctuary must always be given a friendly greeting – a *chaire* – even if one is simply passing by without any reason, or else the gesture of a kiss may be made by raising a hand to one’s lips; a short, simple prayer may always be added.’

<sup>55</sup> J. D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek religion* (Oxford 2005) 27; cf. G. Sissa and M. Detienne, *The daily life of the Greek gods* (Stanford 2000) 166-78.

<sup>56</sup> One of the best attempts is that of J. Roisman, ‘Honor in Alexander’s campaign’ in Roisman, *Brill’s Companion* (n. 2 above) 279-321 (291), although it suggests more of a religious context for the gesture than the evidence supports.



Having established this, we must still address the fact that the surviving Alexander historians use the term somewhat differently. Arrian associates the words προσκυνεῖν and προσκύνῃσις with Alexander's desire to be recognized as son of Ammon rather than Philip,<sup>57</sup> and has Callisthenes distinguish between kissing (φιλεῖσθαι), as the appropriate way to greet a man, and προσκύνῃσις, which does not involve any touching, as appropriate for gods.<sup>58</sup> He clearly understood the action to involve prostration, referring to Alexander's companions 'standing up' (ἀναστάντα) after performing it,<sup>59</sup> and having Leonnatus describe a Persian doing it as 'abject' (ταπεινός).<sup>60</sup> This interpretation of the word is absolutely clear in authors writing in Latin, who use unambiguous phrases such as 'ipsum salutare prosternentes humi corpora',<sup>61</sup> and 'humi iacentium adulationes'.<sup>62</sup> It is not clear from Plutarch's use of the words what he thought the term meant or implied, beyond the fact that it was the cause of indignation to 'the best and oldest of the Macedonians',<sup>63</sup> but it seems likely that he shared Arrian's understanding. It follows that when these authors, writing in the first and second centuries AD, found references to προσκύνῃσις in their sources, they will have assumed that it referred to the act of prostration, and interpreted the episodes in that light. We should therefore now turn to their accounts of the events.

*Narrative Structure and Moral Messages: Arrian, Anabasis 4.7-14 and Plutarch, Alexander 48-55*

The discussion of Alexander and προσκύνῃσις in the surviving ancient accounts is restricted to two stories: one, involving a substantial debate on the subject, is found in Arrian and Curtius,<sup>64</sup> the other, in which a cup is passed round and a kiss bestowed, in Arrian and Plutarch.<sup>65</sup> As we will see, some modern scholars have rejected the first of these as fiction, but accepted the second as historical, and taken it as essentially reliable in detail: Plutarch names the original source, Chares of Mitylene, and there is a tendency to assume that Arrian and Plutarch essentially copied his work.<sup>66</sup> But this underestimates the extent to which stories about Alexander might be adapted to suit the authors' own purposes, or might have been altered in the transmission. As we will see later, Chares' story was in origin a story about a boorish courtier, not about Alexander. In order to assess the stories fully we should start by considering that for authors of the surviving accounts the προσκύνῃσις episode was part of a broader structure, and that they discussed it in ways that worked within the broader context. To understand the προσκύνῃσις stories properly therefore, we need to understand their position in the narratives.

<sup>57</sup> Arr. 4.9.9.

<sup>58</sup> Arr. 4.10.3.

<sup>59</sup> Arr. 4.12.3.

<sup>60</sup> Arr. 4.12.2.

<sup>61</sup> Curt. 8.5.6: 'to greet him by prostrating themselves bodily on the ground.'

<sup>62</sup> Livy 9.18.4: 'acts of worship by men lying on the ground.'

<sup>63</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 54.2-3.

<sup>64</sup> Arr. 4.10.5-12.2; Curt. 8.5.5-22.

<sup>65</sup> Arr. 4.12.3-6; Plut. *Alex.* 54.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) II 88.

Both stories focus on the figure of Callisthenes, and are linked to accounts of Callisthenes' subsequent arrest and death. In both Plutarch and Arrian the death of Callisthenes is told at the end of a sequence of stories: the killing of Cleitus, Alexander's subsequent remorse and his being comforted by the philosophers Anaxarchus and Callisthenes, the stories about προσκύνησις, then the 'Pages' Plot', the implication of Callisthenes in it, and his subsequent imprisonment and death. The sequence in Plutarch follows directly from a story with similar themes, the arrest and trial of Philotas, while Arrian starts from the account of the mutilation of Bessus.<sup>67</sup> It is a normal part of Plutarch's method to group together stories with a similar theme, but this is not Arrian's usual approach,<sup>68</sup> and the sequence requires closer attention.

The careful construction and the position of this sequence of stories 'at the midpoint of the *Anabasis*',<sup>69</sup> has been noted by scholars, as has the fact that the stories are mostly not based on Arrian's principal sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus.<sup>70</sup> But while it has been noted that the stories illustrate 'stock themes of rhetoric and moralizing philosophy',<sup>71</sup> the implications of this for the reliability of the individual episodes, and especially for the stories about προσκύνησις, have not been fully appreciated.

It would be a mistake to assume that all the elements of Arrian's *Anabasis* were taken directly from earlier narrative sources. The notion that Arrian was choosing between his favoured sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus on the one hand, and an alternative 'vulgate' narrative tradition on the other, is at best an oversimplification.<sup>72</sup> Stories about Alexander occur in a number of non-narrative moralizing works from the period of the Roman Empire, written in both Latin and Greek.<sup>73</sup> If we look at the stories that the authors of these works choose to pick out, and also how they combine different stories, we will get a better understanding of the place of Alexander in the popular imagination at the time that the surviving Alexander historians were writing. That image will have had its impact on those writers.

<sup>67</sup> Important discussions of the sequence in Arrian are Brunt, *Arrian* (n. 2 above) II 532-44, Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) II 45-47, calling it 'The Great Digression'.

<sup>68</sup> Arr. 4.8.1 and 4.14.4 both draw attention to the chronological displacement.

<sup>69</sup> P. A. Stadter, *Arrian of Nicomedia* (Chapel Hill 1980) 83.

<sup>70</sup> Brunt, *Arrian*, (n. 2 above) II 534-7.

<sup>71</sup> Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) II 45.

<sup>72</sup> Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) I 20 gives this impression: 'There is material from *historians* other than Ptolemy and Aristobulus which strikes Arrian as memorable and not unconvincing and he has included it under the heading of tales told about Alexander (ὡς λεγόμενα μόνον)' (my italics). But see Bosworth, *Commentary* II 49 (on Alexander's adoption of Persian dress, Arr. 4.7.4): 'Arrian is reshaping a standard *exemplum* for his own purposes without necessarily referring to any specific historical source'. E. J. Baynham, 'Arrian's sources and reliability' in *The Landmark Arrian*, ed. J. Romm (New York 2010) 325-32 (329-30) lists the Greek historians mentioned in Arrian's *Indica* (a list that does not include Cleitarchus), and suggests that this list represents the range of Arrian's sources for the *Anabasis*. Brunt, *Arrian* (n. 2 above) II 537 appears more cautious: 'It is plain that the "vulgate" [...] consists of a variety of traditions or fictions.'

<sup>73</sup> D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander: reading a cultural myth* (Exeter 2002).

Valerius Maximus provides a helpful starting point for analysis.<sup>74</sup> One of his *exempla* concerns men killed by Alexander:

Alexander's bad temper almost deprived him of his place in heaven: for what stood in the way of his ascending there except Lysimachus thrown to a lion, Cleitus run through with a spear and Callisthenes ordered to be killed, so that he paid back his three greatest victories with the unjust killing of the same number of friends?<sup>75</sup>

As we have seen, both Plutarch and Arrian include the deaths of Cleitus and Callisthenes in the same sequence of stories. Neither mentions Lysimachus, presumably since both were well aware that Alexander did not actually kill him. However the story that Alexander shut Lysimachus in a cage with a lion was repeated often.<sup>76</sup> Several writers make similar connections between the three men named by Valerius: Seneca mentions Cleitus and Lysimachus in the same paragraph of his *de Ira*;<sup>77</sup> Lucian, in *Dialogues of the Dead*, refers to the death of Cleitus alongside a conflation of the stories about Callisthenes and Lysimachus.<sup>78</sup> Justin links the stories of Lysimachus and Callisthenes.<sup>79</sup> Arrian comments that he recounted the events leading up to the death of Callisthenes alongside the story of Cleitus and Alexander, 'conceiving that they were more at home in the narrative here.'<sup>80</sup> In thus linking these examples of 'Alexander's acts of *hybris*',<sup>81</sup> he (like Plutarch) is following a well-established pattern.

Valerius Maximus has another passage on Alexander that is relevant here:

The virtue and fortune of king Alexander became uncontrollable through three very clear stages of insolence: for out of disdain for Philip he adopted Jupiter Hammon as his father; tired of the customs and manners of Macedonia he assumed Persian dress and practices; out of scorn for the mortal condition he emulated divinity. He was not ashamed to conceal his nature as a son, a citizen, and a mortal man.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>74</sup> See D. Spencer, "'You should never meet your heroes ...': growing up with Alexander, the Valerius Maximus way," in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: father and son, lives and afterlives*, ed. E. Carney and D. Ogden (New York 2010) 175-91.

<sup>75</sup> Val. Max. 9.3.ext.1: 'Alexandrum iracundia sua propemodum caelo deripuit: nam quid obstitit quo minus illuc adsurgeret nisi Lysimachus leoni obiectus et Clitus hasta traictus et Callisthenes mori iussus, quia tres maximas uictorias totidem amicorum iniustis caedibus uicto reddidit?'

<sup>76</sup> E.g. Plut. *Demetr.* 27.3, Sen. *de clem.* 1.25.1. And see below.

<sup>77</sup> Sen. *de ira* 3.17.2.

<sup>78</sup> Lucian, *Dialogi mortuorum* 14.4, with its reference to λέουσι συγκατακλείων πεπαιδευμένους ἄνδρας ('learned men locked up with lions'). At 3.6 Lucian has Diogenes point out 'Cleitus and Callisthenes and many others' preparing to tear Alexander to pieces.

<sup>79</sup> Just. *Epit.* 15.3.3-16.

<sup>80</sup> Arr. 4.14.4: τούτοις μᾶλλον τι οἰκεία ὑπολαβὼν ἐς τὴν ἀφῆγησιν.

<sup>81</sup> Stadter, *Arrian* (n. 71, above) 83.

<sup>82</sup> Val. Max. 9.5.ext.1: 'Alexandri regis uirtus ac felicitas tribus insolentiae euidentissimis gradibus exultauit: fastidio enim Philippi Iouem Hammonem patrem asciiuit, taedio morum et cultus Macedonici uestem et instituta Persica adsumpsit, spreto mortali habitu diuinum, aemulatus est, nec fuit ei pudori filium, ciuem, hominem dissimulare.'

These three ‘stages of insolence’ are very much the subject of Arrian and Plutarch’s narrative sequences. Arrian’s version starts with his disapproval of Alexander’s un-Greek (βαρβαρικῇ) mutilation of Bessus, and his regret at Alexander being seduced by the luxury of the Medes and the Persians.<sup>83</sup> His account of the quarrel with Cleitus focuses in particular on Alexander’s supposed rejection of Philip in favour of Zeus as his father, and again emphasizes how Alexander’s behaviour was becoming more un-Greek (βαρβαρικώτερον – the word is used twice in the episode).<sup>84</sup> Finally, all three themes come together in Callisthenes’ speech in opposition to προσκύνησις, where Callisthenes argues that Alexander should receive honours appropriate to a man, not a god, that Alexander should be considered as the son of Philip, and that προσκύνησις is an act that Persians and Medes are used to, but that is humiliating for Greeks.<sup>85</sup> Arrian uses the ‘Grand Digression’ to address the accusations made against Alexander in passages such as that in Valerius, and to deflect their impact, partly by drawing universal conclusions from them about the importance of self-control,<sup>86</sup> and partly by emphasizing Alexander’s compensating virtues.<sup>87</sup> Plutarch, who does not include a speech by Callisthenes in his account, puts these three charges against Alexander into the mouth of Cleitus.<sup>88</sup> But these climactic events are not the only ones where the influence of the moralizing tradition is visible: the same themes are visible in the accounts we have from Arrian and Curtius of the ‘mutiny at Opis’.<sup>89</sup> Although the two accounts are rather different, both lay stress on accusations that Alexander preferred barbarians to Macedonians,<sup>90</sup> and Arrian has Alexander in a speech counter the suggestion that he did not see Philip as his father.<sup>91</sup>

By referring to the ‘virtue and fortune’ (‘virtus ac felicitas’) of Alexander, Valerius is pointing to a very well established *topos* for moralizing discourse. Plutarch wrote a two-book work *The Fortune or Virtue of Alexander the Great*,<sup>92</sup> addressing the question of how much of Alexander’s success should be put down to virtue, and how much to fortune.<sup>93</sup> Arrian generally avoids this way of looking at Alexander, but he is not totally immune to the vocabulary, commenting on Alexander’s rapid defeat of the Indians under Oxicanus, that they were defeated by Alexander and Alexander’s fortune.<sup>94</sup> Curtius also, in his obituary of Alexander, debates the question, coming down firmly on one side: ‘it must be said however, that while he owed much to virtue, he owed more to fortune, which he alone of all mortals

<sup>83</sup> Arr. 4.7.4.

<sup>84</sup> Arr. 4.8.

<sup>85</sup> Arr. 4.11.2-9.

<sup>86</sup> Arr. 4.7.5, 4.9.1.

<sup>87</sup> Arr. 4.9.2, 4.9.6.

<sup>88</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 50.6-51.1.

<sup>89</sup> Arr. 7.8-11; Curt. 10.2.12-4.3.

<sup>90</sup> Arr. 7.8.2, 7.11.6; Curt. 10.2.27, 10.3.11-14.

<sup>91</sup> Arr. 7.9.2-5.

<sup>92</sup> *Mor.* 326d-345b.

<sup>93</sup> In Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander*, Fortune (τύχη) is not always beneficial. On the one hand, the site of the battle of Issos was a gift of Fortune (20.4), but at other times Alexander has to fight to overcome τύχη: 26.7, 58.2.

<sup>94</sup> Arr. 6.16.2.

had under his control.’<sup>95</sup> This is not an isolated remark: Curtius uses the word *fortuna* 128 times in his work, indicating that the question of the role of fortune (or luck) was the lens through which he observed Alexander’s career.

What this analysis demonstrates is that there were not two discourses about Alexander, in one of which historians sought out what was reliable in earlier historical writings, while in the other moralists took these stories and adapted them to suit the message they were trying to communicate.<sup>96</sup> Rather, there was one single discourse, and moralizing tales found their way into the histories as often as historical narratives found their way into moral writings. This should not be surprising: the most sober of our surviving narratives, those of Plutarch and Arrian, were written by authors steeped in the philosophical tradition.

### *Transferable stories and contested narratives*

It is clear that Alexander’s career, and episodes within it, could be used to make a range of often contrasting moral points. In retelling the stories, writers would polish them up, removing context that got in the way of the central point. But such stories could be polished to such an extent that all that was left was an aphorism, and these floating aphorisms could be deployed in multiple ways. An example is a half-line from the *Iliad* supposedly quoted in the context of Alexander’s claims to divinity (or the rejection of such claims). In his *Life of Alexander*, Plutarch illustrates what appears to be Alexander’s vacillating understanding of his paternity by referring to a letter to the Athenians where Alexander supposedly called Philip ‘the man then called my lord and father’, and adding that later when Alexander was injured, he said to his friends ‘this is blood that is flowing, not “ichor, such as flows in the veins of the blessed gods”’.<sup>97</sup> Here Alexander himself is using the quotation to show that he made no claims to divinity – and Plutarch tells the story twice more, in *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* and in *On the Fortune of Alexander the Great*.<sup>98</sup> But the same line is attributed by Diogenes Laertius not to Alexander, but to the philosopher Anaxarchus. Anaxarchus appears in Arrian and Plutarch’s accounts of the aftermath of the killing of Cleitus, where he is presented in a negative light as encouraging Alexander to think of himself as above the law. This is contrasted with the more measured and sober approach of Callisthenes. But according to Diogenes Laertius, Anaxarchus was a force for moderation and good philosophy:

He succeeded in diverting Alexander when he had begun to think himself a god; for, seeing blood running from a wound he had sustained, he pointed to him with his finger and said, ‘this is blood, not “ichor, such as flows in the veins of the blessed gods”’.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Curt. 10.5.35.

<sup>96</sup> *Contra e.g.* A. J. S. Spawforth, ‘The court of Alexander the Great between Europe and Asia’ in *The court and court society in ancient monarchies*, ed. A. J. S. Spawforth (Cambridge 2007) 82-120 (89), who contrasts ‘the anecdotal tradition about Alexander on the one hand and [...] the primary Alexander-narratives on the other’.

<sup>97</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 28.3, quoting *Iliad* 5.340: ἰχὼρ, οἷός περ τε ῥέει μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν.

<sup>98</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 180e, 341b.

<sup>99</sup> D. L. 9.60.

Diogenes is writing after Plutarch, but the line turns up earlier, in the elder Seneca's first *Suasoria*. Here we have a similar story, but with a different tone, and a different philosopher. According to Seneca's story, Alexander was beginning to require respect as a god, and was then wounded, and Callisthenes 'seeing the blood, marvelled that it was not "ichor, such as flows in the veins of the blessed gods," and Alexander avenged this witticism with a spear.'<sup>100</sup> It is not profitable to ask which is the true version: quite possibly there was no such incident at any time. But once a good story has sprung into being, it can be adapted to any situation.

A further problem faced by scholars trying to reconstruct the events of Alexander's reign, which was perhaps an incentive for later writers to be inventive with the tradition, is the fact that disagreement over the historicity of some episodes starts very early. The most entertaining illustration of this is provided by Plutarch, when he discusses the historicity of Alexander's meeting with the queen of the Amazons. Plutarch names five historians, including Onesicritus and Cleitarchus, who claim that the meeting happened, and nine others who say that the story was a fiction, including Ptolemy, Aristobulus and Chares. So the story was circulating from very early on. Plutarch comments:

And it is said that many years afterwards Onesicritus was reading aloud to Lysimachus, who was now king, the fourth book of his history, in which was the tale of the Amazon, at which Lysimachus smiled gently and said, 'And where was I at the time?'<sup>101</sup>

The fact that Plutarch introduces this story with the word λέγεται ('it is said') means of course that even this illustration of the tendency of historians to prefer what makes a good story to what actually happened may itself be only a good story.

Another illustration of the problem is provided by Arrian, discussing the death of Callisthenes. He notes:

Callisthenes' fate is variously reported: Aristobulus writes that he was dragged about in chains wherever the army went, till his health broke and he died. According to Ptolemy he was first tortured and then hanged. So we see that even the most trustworthy writers, men who were actually with Alexander at the time, have given conflicting accounts of notorious events with which they must have been perfectly familiar. Many other details of this affair have been handled by other writers, too, in a most confusing and contradictory manner – so I can do no better than leave the story as I have told it.<sup>102</sup>

Modern scholars have been less prepared than Arrian to keep an open mind,<sup>103</sup> but his recognition of the fact that Alexander's short life was contested probably even before he had finished living it is something that should be borne in mind at all times.

<sup>100</sup> Seneca. *Suas.* 1.5.

<sup>101</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 46.2.

<sup>102</sup> Arr. 4.14.

<sup>103</sup> E.g. Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) I 100: 'There is no doubt that Ptolemy's is the correct version.' Cf. Badian, *Collected papers* (n. 2 above) 259.

*Callisthenes and προσκύνησις*

As has been noted, the stories about the ‘experiment with προσκύνησις’ that survive in the sources all involve the figure of Callisthenes, and cannot be detached from the stories told about him. Both Plutarch and Arrian introduce their accounts of episodes relating to προσκύνησις with explicit reference to Callisthenes’ role.<sup>104</sup> Any discussion of these stories needs therefore to start with a consideration of the presentation of Callisthenes in the surviving sources.

Callisthenes’ presence in Alexander’s court is generally recognized as being due to his role as ‘official historian’ for Alexander, and in this role he was criticized in antiquity for excessive flattery.<sup>105</sup> However, as we have seen, in the early imperial period he came to be depicted more as a philosopher who delivered precepts of wisdom to Alexander’s courtiers.<sup>106</sup> The image of the philosopher in the court of the tyrant, telling truth to power, was an established one in Greek literature: Solon with Croesus and Simonides with Hieron are the most notable examples.<sup>107</sup> It remained significant in the Hellenistic period, up to and beyond the time of Plutarch and Arrian.<sup>108</sup> Callisthenes, as the nephew of Aristotle, will have seemed a good candidate for the role, even if both the tone of his history and the nature of his character as depicted by contemporary sources suggest that he would not have played it very well.

One aspect of Callisthenes’ character mentioned a number of times is his inability to behave appropriately at symposia. Plutarch says that he often refused invitations, ‘and when he did go into company, by his gravity and silence made it appear that he disapproved or disliked what was going on’.<sup>109</sup> He goes on to talk about an occasion when Callisthenes, ἐπὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου (‘as the cup was passed to him’) was instructed first to make a speech in praise of the Macedonians, and having done that to great acclaim, was then asked to make a speech in criticism of them, which he did so thoroughly that he was henceforward hated by the Macedonians.<sup>110</sup> A further story is reported twice in Plutarch’s *Moralia*<sup>111</sup> and also in Athenaeus. Athenaeus has the fullest version:

But the sophist Callisthenes, according to Lynceus of Samos in his *Reminiscences* and Aristobulus and Chares in their *Histories*, pushed aside the cup of unmixed wine when it came to him at Alexander’s symposium, and when somebody said to him,

<sup>104</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 54.2, Arr. 4.10.5.

<sup>105</sup> E.g. *PHerc* 1675 (= Philodemus *FGrH* 124 T 21); Polyb. 12.12b (citing Timaeus); Str. 17.1.43. Fragments and *testimonia* gathered as *FGrH* 124; discussion: L. Pearson, *The lost histories of Alexander the Great* (New York 1960) 22-49.

<sup>106</sup> Just. *Epit.* 15.3.6 (praecepta [...] virtutis); Seneca, *Suas.* 1.5.

<sup>107</sup> Hdt. 1.29-33; Xen. *Hiero.* [Plat.] *Ep.* 2.310e5-311b6 provides a longer list; cf. V. Gray, *Xenophon on government* (Cambridge 2007) 31-32.

<sup>108</sup> O. Murray, ‘Philosophy and monarchy in the Hellenistic world’ in *Jewish perspectives on Hellenistic rulers* (Berkeley 2007) 13-28 (esp. 16, 26).

<sup>109</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 53.2.

<sup>110</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 53.3-4.

<sup>111</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 454e, 623f.

‘Why don’t you drink?’ he replied, ‘I don’t want to be in need of one of Asclepius’ cups after drinking from one of Alexander’s.’<sup>112</sup>

Since both stories about προσκύνησις found in the Alexander historians are set at symposia, and since Chares, mentioned as a source for Athenaeus’ anecdote, is also named by Plutarch as a source for his story about προσκύνησις, the existence of stories like this is very significant. We should consider that story not simply in the context of προσκύνησις, but in the wider context of court etiquette.

#### *Chares’ story*

Chares of Mitylene was Alexander’s εἰσαγγελεύς. This term, usually translated as ‘chamberlain’ is used by Herodotus and Diodorus to refer to a role in the Persian court.<sup>113</sup> Chares therefore owed his position to Alexander’s development of an elaborate court and while, as we have seen, he records other stories hostile to Callisthenes, there is no reason to suppose that he would have deliberately wanted to tell stories that depicted the adoption of Persian court practices as a bad thing. Both Plutarch and Arrian record versions of a story involving Callisthenes, a cup and a kiss. Plutarch’s version is as follows:

Chares of Mitylene says that once in the symposium Alexander, after drinking, handed the cup to one of his friends, and he, on receiving it, stood and turned towards the hearth, and when he had drunk, first did προσκύνησις, then kissed Alexander, and then returned to his couch. As all the guests were doing this in turn, Callisthenes took the cup, while the king was not paying attention, but chatting to Hephaestion, and after he had drunk went forward for the kiss; but when Demetrius, surnamed Pheido, said: ‘My King, don’t kiss him – he is the only one not to do προσκύνησις,’ Alexander declined the kiss, at which Callisthenes exclaimed in a loud voice: ‘So I depart the poorer by a kiss.’<sup>114</sup>

Arrian’s version of the story, introduced by the phrase ‘the following story has also been written down’ is almost identical.<sup>115</sup> However he makes no mention of the hearth, and he adds the detail that Alexander passed the cup ‘first to those with whom the issue of προσκύνησις had been agreed’.<sup>116</sup> Quite elaborate theories have been built on the reference to the hearth,<sup>117</sup> but it is clear that neither Plutarch nor Arrian recognized any significance to it.<sup>118</sup> Because Arrian links this story closely to that of the debate, the nature of the occasion in his version is a little difficult to judge (see below). As Plutarch

<sup>112</sup> Athen. 10.434d.

<sup>113</sup> Hdt. 3.84.2; Diod. 16.47.3.

<sup>114</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 54.3.

<sup>115</sup> Arr. 4.12.3-5: ἀναγέγραπται δὲ δὴ καὶ τοῖόσδε λόγος.

<sup>116</sup> Arr. 4.12.3: πρῶτοις μὲν τούτοις πρὸς οὓσιν αὐτῷ τῆς προσκυνήσεως.

<sup>117</sup> Hamilton, *Plutarch, Alexander* (n. 2 above) 150 lists examples.

<sup>118</sup> Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) II 89; Badian, *Collected papers* (n. 2 above) 258-59.



tells it however, we have an account of something that simply happened ἐν τῷ συμποσίῳ ('in the symposium'), that is, in the course of a normal evening's drinking.<sup>119</sup>

We should recognize that Chares' story belongs to a particular genre, that is, of stories set at symposia that reveal the character of the host or of a guest (or both) – often because of their unmannerly or disorderly conduct.<sup>120</sup> An obvious early example of the genre is the story of Hippocleides at the palace of Cleisthenes of Sicyon, reported by Herodotus.<sup>121</sup> Like the moralizing stories discussed earlier, these stories would not have been tied to specific narratives, but could have circulated in collections: Lynceus of Samos' *Apomnemoneumata* ('Reminiscences') might well have been of this kind. And like those and other stories, they may end with some kind of a punchline. Although Herodotus embeds his account of Hippocleides' behaviour in his general narrative, it is clear that the story circulated because of Hippocleides' remark, οὐ φροντὶς Ἴπποκλείδῃ ('Hippocleides doesn't care'). In the same way Chares' story has a punchline: it ends with Callisthenes saying, loudly (μέγα φθεγγόμενον) according to Plutarch, 'I depart poorer by a kiss'. The phrase is essentially identical in Plutarch and Arrian's versions.<sup>122</sup> Like Hippocleides' remark, this would have been easily recognized as a foolish and boorish thing for Callisthenes to say: a kiss from the king was a considerable benefaction, and so to make light of not receiving one was to insult Alexander. This is worth exploring further.

In the fourth century it was certainly the case that the bestowal of a kiss on a favoured courtier was recognized as a practice normal in Persian courts.<sup>123</sup> However, there is no suggestion that it was seen by Greeks as particularly problematic or 'barbaric'.<sup>124</sup> Plutarch and Arrian's readers would have recognized the bestowal of a kiss as a sign of honour, and therefore Callisthenes' remark as rudeness. Roman emperors from Augustus onwards established court protocols that included the daily kiss bestowed on the emperor's *amici* to mark their status.<sup>125</sup> In his *Panegyricus* Plutarch's contemporary Pliny draws attention to the value placed on receiving a kiss from Trajan.<sup>126</sup> Whether or not kissing was a part of Macedonian court etiquette before Alexander is not clear (see below). In those courts where it was used, it is clear that it was valued by courtiers precisely because it broke

<sup>119</sup> Plutarch's reference (*Alex.* 55.1) to Hephaestion claiming that Callisthenes had promised to perform προσκύνῃσις and then reneged indicates that Plutarch knew the story of the debate, in which there is an important element of pre-planning. It is not proof of pre-planning in Chares' story, which clearly ends with Callisthenes' departing comment. For the opposite view: Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) II 88, but see the discussion below.

<sup>120</sup> G. Paul, 'Symposia and *deipna* in Plutarch's *Lives* and in other historical writings' in *Dining in a classical context*, ed. W. J. Slater (Ann Arbor 1991) 157-69.

<sup>121</sup> Hdt. 6.129.

<sup>122</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 54.3: φύληματι τοίνυν ἔλασσον ἔχων ἄπειμι. Arr. 4.12.5: φύληματι ἔλαττον ἔχων ἄπειμι.

<sup>123</sup> Xen. *Cyr.* 1.4.27, Ages. 5.5.

<sup>124</sup> Xenophon tells the story of Agesilaus declining to kiss the young Megabates, and thus leaving him feeling insulted, but the story is told to show Agesilaus' self-control (*enkrateia*): he is physically attracted to Megabates, so by refusing to kiss him he is resisting his sexual impulses (*Ages.* 5.4-6).

<sup>125</sup> L. Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*, 4 volumes (London 1908-13) I 89-92, IV 58-60; J. Paterson, 'Friends in high places: the creation of the court of the Roman emperor' in Spawforth, *Court and Court Society* (n. 96, above) 121-56; cf. Suet. *Tib.* 34.2, *Otho* 6.1; Dio 59.27.1.

<sup>126</sup> Plin. *Pan.* 23.1, 24.2.

down the barrier between subject and monarch for those privileged enough to be allowed to kiss the king. In that sense it did the opposite to what Roman writers, and many modern scholars, have believed was the purpose of προσκύνησις, that is to create a distance between king and everyone else.

If we return to Chares' story in the light of this discussion it becomes clear that as Plutarch and Arrian report it there is something rather odd about the train of events. The problem lies with the act of προσκύνησις itself. As we have seen, the word was used refer to actions ranging from a response to a sneeze up to prostration. It is not clear what is being referred to in the story as we have it. Plutarch and Arrian start from the assumption that the courtiers were asked to do something that Callisthenes might reasonably object to, and modern scholars have naturally assumed that it refers to a formal action that Alexander wanted to introduce into court protocol (whether or not this involved prostration). In the context of a symposium, for Alexander's friends to stand up, drink from a cup, then perform a gesture associated with greeting or bidding goodbye to the king, and then receive a kiss and resume their place, is meaningless. It has been suggested that Alexander was requiring his friends to engage in an action that emphasized the distance between them and him (προσκύνησις), and then rewarding them by a gesture that emphasized closeness (kissing),<sup>127</sup> but it is not obvious what this would achieve when it took place in a symposium rather than a public context. One way of explaining this would be to suggest that at a symposium all kinds of games might take place, and that the performance of προσκύνησις was simply that, a performance – Greeks acting like Persians. There is no suggestion that there were any Persians present: this was Alexander amongst his friends. If it were a game, Callisthenes' refusal to play would fit with the picture of him as someone who was a poor guest at symposia, but would hardly represent a principled stand against tyranny. In the light of the earlier discussion of the malleability of the stories that make up our narratives about Alexander, we should consider a more radical explanation for why the story we have takes the form it does.

As we have seen, this story is part of a sequence linking the death of Cleitus to the death of Callisthenes, and it occupies an identical position in the sequence in the narratives of Plutarch and Arrian. The sequence of stories focuses on Alexander's failings, and these failings are voiced by the two victims of the events described, Cleitus and Callisthenes. It is reasonable to suppose that this sequence had been constructed earlier to illustrate Alexander's moral weakness, and was adopted by both Plutarch and Arrian. In either case this would mean that the two authors are not in fact drawing independently on Chares' text. The sequence includes an occasion when Callisthenes is depicted publicly speaking in opposition to προσκύνησις: this is referred to briefly by Plutarch,<sup>128</sup> and presented in detail by Arrian,<sup>129</sup> and Chares' story is an addendum to that. We have also seen that stories involving Callisthenes were modified and rewritten to present him as standing up for freedom against tyranny. It is quite possible that these two processes have been at work in this case. In that case it may be that Chares' story was not originally about προσκύνησις at

<sup>127</sup> E. A. Fredricksmeyer, 'Alexander the Great and the kingship of Asia' in *Alexander the Great in fact and fiction*, ed. A. B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham (Oxford 2000) 136-66 (156-57).

<sup>128</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 54.2.

<sup>129</sup> Arr. 4.10.5-12.6. Discussion is below.

all. Rather, it was a story about Callisthenes failing to perform some other act as part of a symposium. We have already noted a rather similar story attributed to Chares in which Callisthenes declined to drink from the cup that was being passed around;<sup>130</sup> it is not impossible that a writer looking for a story about Callisthenes standing up to Alexander transformed the reluctance to drink into a refusal to perform προσκύνησις. Even if that is not the case, Chares was clearly the source of a number of anecdotes about Callisthenes, any one of which might have been adapted to fit its new role.

Whatever may have been the original version of the story, it is in any case difficult to see it as part of any ‘experiment with προσκύνησις’. Προσκύνησις, understood to refer to the way Persians behaved when they came into the presence of the King, was a formal action performed in public situations. The cup-and-kiss story takes place in a more informal, private setting, where Alexander is apparently only with his Macedonian and Greek friends. No-one other than Callisthenes is presented as objecting to whatever action they are asked to perform. It gains its relevance from being told immediately after a story where Callisthenes is presented as arguing against the introduction of προσκύνησις. It is to that which we should now turn.

### *The Debate*

Both Quintus Curtius Rufus and Arrian describe an occasion when a philosopher in Alexander’s court advocates the introduction of προσκύνησις. Plutarch clearly knew this story too, since, as we have seen, he refers to it in introducing the cup-and-kiss story from Chares. A certain amount of scepticism has been expressed about the historicity of the story, although it has had its defenders.<sup>131</sup> The outline of the story is that one person, with Alexander’s encouragement, but in his absence, makes a speech arguing that Alexander had achieved such great things, surpassing Heracles and Dionysus, that he deserved, like them, to be worshipped as a god. Callisthenes then makes a speech opposing this, which angers Alexander but pleases the Macedonians present. As a result Alexander sends a message to say that he will not require προσκύνησις from his Greek and Macedonian courtiers. Then on Alexander’s return the Persians present perform προσκύνησις, and one of them is mocked by one of Alexander’s Macedonians, angering the king.

Although the two historians are clearly describing the same thing, and presumably drawing on a common original, there are some differences between the versions. Some of the names are different. Curtius attributes the opening speech to Cleon of Sicily, while Arrian puts it in the mouth of Anaxarchus.<sup>132</sup> These choices are determined by the writers’ broader aims: Curtius is drawing a clear contrast between Greeks, who are presented as corrupt flatterers,<sup>133</sup> and the upright Macedonians. Arrian is following a tradition also found in Plutarch that presents Anaxarchus and Callisthenes as rival philosophers

<sup>130</sup> Ath. 10.434d.

<sup>131</sup> See Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) II 77-78 for the state of the debate. More recent scholarship has tended to follow Bosworth and to accept its historicity: e.g. M. Faraguna, ‘Alexander and the Greeks’, in Roisman, *Brill’s companion* (n. 2 above) 99-132 (118); Roisman, ‘Honor’ (n. 56 above) 319.

<sup>132</sup> Curt. 8.5.10, Arr. 4.10.5.

<sup>133</sup> Curt. 8.5.7-8.

constantly at odds with each other.<sup>134</sup> We have already seen that the quotation from Homer about ichor was attributed by different authors to each of these two men with opposite intentions, so their rivalry was an established literary *topos*. As with other such stories, it was malleable. Plutarch presents Callisthenes as tactful and gentle, and Anaxarchus as rough and aggressive;<sup>135</sup> Arrian in contrast makes Anaxarchus the gentler,<sup>136</sup> and Callisthenes the more uncouth.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, different names are given for the Macedonian who mocked the Persian performance of προσκύνησις: Polyperchon in Curtius, Leonnatus in Arrian. This element of the story could also float freely from the rest of the debate. Plutarch, who, as we have seen, chooses not to describe the debate in his narrative, attributes the mockery to Cassander, and places the story in Babylon shortly before Alexander's death.<sup>138</sup>

The two versions set the debate in somewhat different circumstances. Curtius emphasizes that it took place at a major event, to which Persians were especially (and by implication unusually) invited.<sup>139</sup> In contrast Arrian sets the story at a symposium.<sup>140</sup> Regardless of whether or not the story has any basis in historical reality, Curtius' public occasion makes more sense as a place where προσκύνησις might be performed.<sup>141</sup> Arrian's decision to move the events to a symposium is easy to understand on the basis that he sees the debate and the cup-and-kiss incident happening during the same single event. When retelling that story he says nothing about its context, but refers to 'those with whom the issue of προσκύνησις had been agreed (ξυνέκειτο)'.<sup>142</sup> This is clearly a reference back to the introduction to the account of the debate, where he notes that 'it had been agreed (ξυγκεῖσθαι) between Alexander and the sophists and the most notable of the Persians and Medes in his circle, to introduce discussion of this topic at a symposium'.<sup>143</sup> This is evidence of Arrian's willingness to adapt the stories he found to make a more satisfying narrative structure. It also suggests that he was aware that the stories he introduces with phrases like 'τοῖόσδε κατέχει λόγος' ('the story goes something like this') and 'ἀναγέγραπται δὲ δὴ καὶ τοῖόσδε λόγος' ('a story something like this is recorded')<sup>144</sup> had possibly been altered in the telling, and could therefore be further altered by him.

When we examine the terms of the debate itself however, we have to recognize that it could not have taken place in Alexander's own time. The argument of Anaxarchus in

<sup>134</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 52. E. N. Borza, 'Anaxarchus and Callisthenes: academic intrigue at Alexander's court', in *Ancient Macedonian studies in honour of Charles F. Edson*, ed. H. Dell (Thessaloniki 1981) 73-86.

<sup>135</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 52.2, 5.

<sup>136</sup> Arr. 4.9.7-8.

<sup>137</sup> Arr. 4.10.1.

<sup>138</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 74.2-3.

<sup>139</sup> Curt. 8.5.9.

<sup>140</sup> Arr. 4.10.5: ἐν πότῳ.

<sup>141</sup> Badian, *Collected papers* (n. 2 above) 258, notes that in Arrian 'the stage-setting is left a little defective, as the *logos* is worked into his main narrative'.

<sup>142</sup> Arr. 4.12.2.

<sup>143</sup> Arr. 4.10.5. Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) II 88, assumes that there were two distinct occasions, each involving pre-planning, an unnecessarily complicated interpretation.

<sup>144</sup> Arr. 4.10.5, 4.12.2.

Arrian is that Alexander has proved himself worthy of divine honours, since his achievements are greater than those of Dionysus and Heracles (who were themselves respectively Theban and Argive, and therefore less worth honouring than a true Macedonian), and that προσκύνησις was the appropriate form of divine honour to pay to Alexander.<sup>145</sup> Cleon's speech in Curtius was written earlier and is fuller, clarifying the argument as presented in Arrian.<sup>146</sup> He implies that it was commonly accepted that Dionysus and Heracles were mortals who went on to become gods (and Callisthenes in his response implies that this deification happened only after their deaths). He also implies that the Persians performed προσκύνησις to their kings because they were worshipping them as gods.<sup>147</sup> We have seen in the first part of this article that Greeks (and by implication Macedonians) in Alexander's time understood that προσκύνησις in Persia was not a form of worship, and that it was also not a peculiarly religious action for Greeks either. Furthermore, in the story προσκύνησις is taken to mean prostration (hence the mockery of the Persians who performed it by Polyperchon or Leonnatus), and it is clear that this would not have been expected of leading Persians, let alone of Alexander's companions. But we should also consider the claim that Dionysus was a mortal who was subsequently made a god. This would not have been considered the standard story for fourth-century Macedonians. The central theme of Euripides' *Bacchae*, first performed in Macedonia some seventy years earlier, was that Dionysus was not a mere mortal.<sup>148</sup> Alternative traditions about Dionysus that may have circulated in Macedonia throughout the fourth century and later, associated with the poems of Orpheus, refer to his destruction as an infant by the Titans, and subsequent rebirth – making him even less like a mortal.<sup>149</sup> To argue that Alexander's situation paralleled that of Dionysus would not have made obvious sense to an educated fourth-century audience, or even an uneducated one.

Callisthenes' speech in response also includes arguments that would not have made sense in the fourth century BC. Here it is Arrian's version that is longer, as his Callisthenes demonstrates a more developed theological understanding, claiming, as a significant part of his argument, a clear distinction between the cult of gods and heroes: 'Different honours are given to different gods, and indeed different ones to heroes, which are distinct from those of the divinity.'<sup>150</sup> A recent study of Greek practice in the period does not support the idea that gods and heroes received different forms of cult.<sup>151</sup> Nor is

<sup>145</sup> Arr. 4.10.6-11.1. The mention of the city of origin of Heracles and Dionysus, not mentioned in Curtius, looks like a typical example of Arrian adding an erudite detail to give more weight to his account, or show off his familiarity with Greek traditions: cf. 2.16.1-6, 3.3.1.

<sup>146</sup> Curt. 8.5.10-12.

<sup>147</sup> Curt. 8.5.11: 'Persas [...] reges suos inter deos colere.'

<sup>148</sup> Eur. *Ba.* 20-22, ending ἵν' εἶην ἐμφανῆς δαίμων βοροῖς, 'So that I may appear clearly as a god to mortals'.

<sup>149</sup> The story: Plut. *Mor.* 996b-c. M. L. West, *The Orphic poems* (Oxford 1983) 82-94 argues that the story was part of the poem on which the text of the Derveni Papyrus is a commentary.

<sup>150</sup> Arr. 4.11.3.

<sup>151</sup> G. Ekroth, *The sacrificial rituals of Greek hero-cults in the Archaic to the early Hellenistic periods* (Liège 2002) 341: 'The worshippers sacrificed and ate, just as in the cult of the gods. The heroes cannot be understood as a category ritually isolated from the gods'. Cf. A. Verbanck-Piérard, 'Héros attiques au jour le jour: les calendriers des dèmes' in *Les Panthéons des cites des origines à la Périégèse de Pausanias*, ed. V. Pirenne-Delforge (Liège 1998) 109-27 (119, 127).

Arrian's choice of terms appropriate: references to 'the divinity' (τὸ θεῖον), start to appear in Greek inscriptions only around 200 BC.<sup>152</sup> All of this suggests that the arguments were composed well after Alexander's death.

Now some of these difficulties have been recognized by those scholars who defend the historicity of the debate. Badian comments:

The set debate on deification, which the ancients seem, at least some centuries later, to have accepted as the true account, obviously cannot be as readily accepted by modern scholars. It reads too much like a pamphlet.<sup>153</sup>

Bosworth, while claiming that there was a 'historical core' notes:

In Curtius the sentiments voiced are clearly anachronistic, rhetorical platitudes of the early Empire [...] Arrian's material is more Hellenistic in flavour and could well echo the contemporary debate on the propriety of deifying a living man [see below, *passim*]. The source (or sources) is beyond identification.<sup>154</sup>

But the substance of the argument in Arrian is identical to that in Curtius. Anaxarchus' speech is an abbreviated version of Cleon's, while Arrian's Callisthenes develops his argument at greater length than Curtius', but that argument makes the same two points, that it was inappropriate to offer to men the same honours as are offered to gods, and that it was wrong for a Macedonian to adopt the habits of the Persians. Any 'Hellenistic flavour' in Arrian's version is more that of the second sophistic than of an earlier period.

It can be suggested that the early imperial period also offered a potential specific model for Curtius' depiction of Callisthenes as a guiltless philosopher killed by a tyrant: the younger Seneca, forced to commit suicide by Nero. As with Callisthenes in the surviving sources, Seneca's death was the result of his being implicated in a plot against the ruler.<sup>155</sup> Curtius also suggests that Callisthenes had been, at least earlier in their relationship, a moderating influence on Alexander,<sup>156</sup> as Seneca was on Nero.<sup>157</sup> Comparison has been drawn between the style of Curtius and of the elder Seneca.<sup>158</sup> If

<sup>152</sup> E.g. *IMag* 100a.16; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 994.3.

<sup>153</sup> Badian, *Collected papers* (n. 2 above) 260. He goes on to argue, somewhat puzzlingly, that the fact that the 'προσκύνησις affair' was not included by Ptolemy and Aristobulus 'serves [...] to underline its importance', and concludes that 'the least we must accept from the tradition is that Callisthenes reminded Alexander—who surely did not need reminding—that προσκύνησις, for Greeks, implied deification, and that this would be thought offensive to at least *some* Greek sentiment'.

<sup>154</sup> Bosworth, *Commentary* (n. 2 above) 77-78. Despite the mention of a 'contemporary debate', Bosworth cites very little fourth century evidence for one. See T. S. Brown, 'Alexander and Callisthenes', *AJP* 70 (1949) 225-48 (242): 'The arguments used suggest Roman influence [...] In all probability there never was a debate over deification in Alexander's court.'

<sup>155</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.48-65.

<sup>156</sup> Curt. 8.8.22.

<sup>157</sup> E.g. Tac. *Ann.* 13.2, 5.

<sup>158</sup> E. J. Baynham, *Alexander the Great: the unique history of Quintus Curtius* (Ann Arbor 1998) 27-30.

Curtius was writing under Vespasian,<sup>159</sup> then Seneca, whose last thoughts were written down and widely circulated,<sup>160</sup> would have been a representative of ‘gravitas [...] et prompta libertas’<sup>161</sup> (‘seriousness and readiness to speak freely’) to which Callisthenes could be compared.

As we have also seen, the story attributed to Chares finds its place in the narrative as a support for the story of the debate, rather than as reliable independent evidence for opposition to προσκύνησις.<sup>162</sup> We must therefore accept that since the arguments from which the debate is constructed in our surviving sources could not have been made in Alexander’s own time, the debate cannot be taken as historical. However it is entirely understandable as a piece of writing put together to dramatize the issue of the appropriateness of offering divine honours to mortal rulers – a debate that was a lot more significant in early imperial Rome than it would have been in the classical or Hellenistic Greek worlds.

### *Προσκύνησις in Imperial Rome*

Concern about προσκύνησις is visible most clearly in relation to the activities of Gaius, although it was an issue both before and after that.<sup>163</sup> Accounts of his reign refer to a number of incidents where senators did προσκύνησις to him.<sup>164</sup> Most of the evidence refers to one incident, but the fact that Claudius formally forbade προσκύνησις suggests that it was an established practice under Gaius.<sup>165</sup> Modern scholars have tended to discuss this evidence in the context of Gaius’ desire to be worshipped as a god, but Seneca associates it more with emulation of Persian kingship, and therefore an attack on liberty.<sup>166</sup> In fact, the same association of προσκύνησις with both notions of the Persian style of kingship and claims of divinity is found both in ancient discussions of Gaius and in the arguments in the debate in the Alexander historians, suggesting a quite precise point of origin for the debate story as we have it.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>159</sup> On the date of Curtius there is no scholarly agreement. J. E. Atkinson, *A commentary on Q. Curtius Rufus’ Historiae Alexandri Magni, Books 3 and 4* (Amsterdam 1980) 19-57, argues that he wrote under Claudius; Baynham, *Unique history* (n. 158 above) 201-19, prefers Vespasian.

<sup>160</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.63.

<sup>161</sup> Curt. 8.5.13.

<sup>162</sup> Badian, *Collected papers* (n. 2 above) 258-60 recognizes the problem, but his solution (that Chares made up his story as propaganda against Callisthenes) does not convince.

<sup>163</sup> Dio has stories involving Nero (63.4.3) and Domitian (67.13.4). By the time Dio was writing the practice appears to have been taken for granted: Herodian 3.11.8. Antony’s attempt to offer a crown to Julius Caesar was depicted as including prostration: Cic. *Phil.* 2.85-6.

<sup>164</sup> Suet. *Vit.* 2; Dio 59.24.1, 59.27; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 6.32; Philo. *Leg.* 116.

<sup>165</sup> Dio 60.5.4.

<sup>166</sup> Sen. *Ben.* 2.12.1-2: ‘ut mores liberae civitatis Persica servitute mutaret’. Cf. e.g. A. A. Barrett, *Caligula: the corruption of power* (London 1989) 150-51; J. M. Roldán, *Caligula: El autocrata inmaduro* (Madrid 2012) 282-84.

<sup>167</sup> Pompeius Trogus, who wrote before Gaius’ reign, associates προσκύνησις with Persian monarchy, but not divinity, if he is accurately summarized by Justin (12.7.1).

### *Conclusion*

Alexander's Macedonian companions were at no time required to prostrate themselves in front of Alexander, and there is no doubt that they would have been outraged if they had been asked to do so. But it is clear that this was never proposed. On the other hand there were many aspects of Persian court life, including the comfortable and luxurious clothing and the large-scale feasting, that they were happy to take part in – not least because this was not so different from the life of the Macedonian court under Philip.<sup>168</sup> The idea of an 'experiment with προσκύνησις' – an experiment that failed and was not repeated – is an invention of the later tradition. It was inspired by distaste amongst writers of the Roman imperial period for what they took corrupting Persian practices to involve. A set-piece literary debate, based on principles and assumptions that would not have been accepted in the fourth century BC, was combined with an adapted symposium story that originally had a completely different message, to create the episode we find in Arrian and Plutarch. In this article I have deconstructed the evidence and placed the individual pieces into their wider contexts, to demonstrate that in the form it comes down to us it reflects the prejudices of the periods after Alexander rather than the historical reality of his own time. This reassessment of the episode has wider implications. The story can no longer be taken as good evidence for Macedonian resentment of Alexander's adoption of aspects of Persian court practice. More importantly it cannot be used as evidence about Alexander's supposed desire for worship or recognition of his 'divine sonship'.<sup>169</sup> Indeed it tells us rather more about the way that the figure of Alexander was being used in the Roman debate about the divinity and the autocratic power of the emperor.<sup>170</sup> The issues raised in the discussion of the episode, including the nature of Alexander's kingship, the functioning of his court, and the question of how far his aims and his understanding of his role changed in the course of his campaign, are important ones. But the result of focusing on a made-up story is that serious discussion of these issues remains distorted and obscured.

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<sup>168</sup> Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 39-40. There are indications that wearing Persian dress might be considered a privilege bestowed by Alexander: Plut. *Alex.* 31.5; cf. Diod. 19.14.5. Spawforth, 'The court of Alexander' (n. 99 above) 92 notes: 'Two striking characteristics of Alexander's reign, his interest in the appearances of power and his imitation of the Persian royal court, can be situated on a larger trajectory rooted in his father's "Macedonian revolution".' Cf. D. Kienast, *Philipp II. von Makedonien und das Reich der Achämeniden* (Munich 1971).

<sup>169</sup> As for example Fredricksmeyer, 'Religion and divinity' (n. 2 above) 274-78, where προσκύνησις is discussed under the heading 'Alexander the God'.

<sup>170</sup> For a very brief discussion see Spencer, *Roman Alexander* (n. 73 above) 178-80.